

**THE BLOG**

Sweet Schadenfreude

By Marty Kaplan

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This suspense may give me the heebie-jeebies, but it's really killing the media.

No one knows who'll be indicted by Patrick Fitzgerald, but you have to think there's more than smoke there. Though the Harriet Miers story could play out in any of a dozen ways, all of them are delicious. Frist, Delay, Blunt, Ney and the rest of Jack Abramoff's butt-boys could actually be in their last throes, and we're not talking Cheney-like wishful thinking here. It's really possible that right now, before our eyes, unfolding in slow motion, is a sordid, jaw-dropping story that connects everything from Bolton to Dobson, Gannon Guckert to Hannity O'Reilly, Florida in 2000 to Ohio in 2004, Enron to Halliburton, lies about the Texas Air National Guard to lies about WMDs. Twenty minutes ago, to hear the media tell it, Rove & Co were geniuses, presiding over a generational shift to the right. Now, they're lawyering themselves to the gills, and beltway speculation centers on whether the GOP could lose both the House and the Senate in 2006. Yesterday, you had to be some tinfoil hat-wearing Michael Moore type to connect the dots; tomorrow, conceivably, exposing the grand conspiracy will be a recipe for a Pulitzer.

Much as the mainstream media pretend to be disinterested, or even skeptical, the narrative they've spun until now has been fawning. They love power, and they love to be loved by the powerful. But Valerie, Terri, Cindy, Katrina and Harriet have finally forced the chattering class to unstrap its kneepads and radically rewrite the story. No one knows how this will all end. But the possibility that the potentates and pundits they've slobbered over these past five years will turn out to be perp-walkers and propagandists has forced the media machine to wake up and smell Karl's Kool-Aid. Their revisionism will be effortless; they'll retroactively have seen this coming all along. Old conventional wisdom: Oval Office blowjobs means the century of the values voter. New conventional wisdom: Monica was a molehill. Throw the bums out.

It's still possible, of course, that the black hats will stay in the saddle. But however it turns out, at least the media no longer have to swallow the triumphalist narrative of inevitability these bozos have been peddling.

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